

BENEFIT INTERVENTIONS ACTION PLAN

This plan seeks to implement the recommendations set out in the BFI Interventions Report.

Recommendation	Priority	Action taken	Responsible Officer	Date for Completion	Monitored by
<p>That HC reviews its process for selecting interventions cases so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - risk-based reviews are carried out on its pensioner caseload in appropriate cases - <i>priority 1</i> risk cases are initially considered for a visit in line with its interventions selection policy 	High	<p>Completed We have amended the procedures to incorporate this in the risk based reviews process.</p>	KD	30 Sept 2006	MT
That HC takes appropriate measures to educate and remind customers to report all relevant changes in their circumstances on time	High	<p>Completed Reminder leaflet introduced and will be sent with all benefit letters.</p>	KD/SB	15 Oct 2006	MT
That HC ensures that, in non-standard claims for HB or CTB, a check of the Department's Customer Information System is undertaken to confirm ongoing entitlement to benefit	High	<p>Completed Process agreed with Support Officer carrying out the CIS checks.</p>	SL	15 Oct 2006	KD
That HC ensures that, where a change of circumstances has been identified, all necessary enquiries are made to establish the effective date of the change, where this results in a reduction in benefit, and that this date is applied to the re-assessment	High	<p>Completed Updated procedures to ensure enquiries are made and include this element in the quality checks so it is monitored.</p>	KD/DB	1 Nov 2006	SB
<p>That HC develops formal procedures that support its risk-based interventions work to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - entitlement to benefit is 	High	<p>Completed Procedures updated to reflect the recommendations, coupled with staff</p>	KD	31 Oct 2006	MT

confirmed by identifying and fully verifying any changes of circumstances that have occurred - the risk code reasons for case selection are made known to, and understood by, its interventions officers		awareness sessions.	KD	5 Sept 2006	MT
That HC prioritises its backlog of interventions cases to identify and deal with those changes where a reduction or termination or benefit is likely	High	Completed Backlog now cleared, all new changes being dealt with in priority order.	SL	Review end Sept 2006	KD
That HC analyses its interventions by source, type, outcome and reason for outcome to inform future targeted review activity, decision making and staff training	Medium	This was not a requirement set by DWP when interventions were introduced so is not currently provided by the Academy system. We are investigating whether Academy can provide this information but planned changes to interventions from 1 April 2007 will affect this.	KD	30 Nov 2006	MT
That HC develops a guidance sheet to be sent with the visit notification that gives the customer clear examples of the type of documentary evidence to have to hand on the day of the visit	Medium	Completed Information sheet developed and sent with all benefit letters.	SL	31 Oct 2006	KD
That HC ensures that all officers involved in the verification of claims to benefit receive appropriate training	Medium	Completed Training course on verification held on 14 November 2006.	SB/KD	30 Nov 2006	MT
That HC provides clear guidance on when it is appropriate to refer cases to the Benefit Investigation Unit. This guidance should reflect the council's investigation referral	Medium	Completed Procedures updated to provide staff with guidance including appropriate amounts.	KD	30 Nov 2006	MT

criteria and the amount of any potential overpayment					
That HC identifies and addresses the causes of inaccurate information in reports produced by its Benefits IT system	Medium	On-going discussions with Academy to ascertain reasons for the errors.	KD	31 Dec 2006	MT
That HC ensures that information from original documents is correctly recorded, either through the use of portable document scanning equipment, or by providing clear guidance on when it is appropriate to bring documents back to the council for scanning as well as providing a receipt	Medium	Completed Procedures updated to include quality checking of Visiting Officers' work by the Interventions Team leader.	KD	31 Oct 2006	MT
That HC provides Verification Visiting Officers with ultraviolet scanners to authenticate original documents	Medium	Completed Visiting Officers now have access to scanners and we will be monitoring their usage.	SL	31 Oct 2006	KD
That HC documents all feedback given to the Verification Visiting Officers by the assessors and uses this feedback to identify training needs	Medium	Completed Procedures updated to include monitoring of feedback.	KD	31 Oct 2006	DB
That HC revises its target for the number of days it takes to clear cases following an intervention to reflect the number of days taken from the date of an effective visit, or the return of a postal review form	Medium	Reviewing targets to establish what would be appropriate to meet this.	MT	30 Nov 2006	
That HC revises its assessment of the risks associated with visiting customers in their homes and considers implementing a system to alert its staff to potentially violent individuals	Medium	Completed The risk assessment has been reviewed and agreed by Health and Safety Officer. Requirement for a Council PVP Policy being pursued through Senior Management Team.	KD MT	15 Oct 2006 31 Dec 2006	MT

That HC introduces a formal process for dealing with referrals that do not meet the criteria for an investigation but may be suitable for an intervention	Low	Completed Included in fraud referral procedures.	KD	30 Nov 2006	MT
That HC carries out a regular review of staff access to the Benefits IT systems	Low	Benefits Service restructure will transfer responsibility for managing system access to the Business Support Team.	Exchequer & Business Support Manager	31 Dec 2006	MT
That HC implements a formal procedure for following up Internal Audit recommendations	Low	Completed Audit Manager has agreed to change follow-up process.	TF	30 Nov 2006	MT

Prepared on 25 August 2006

Updated on 5 September 2006

Reviewed and updated on 16 October by Mike Toney

Reviewed and updated on 24 November by Mike Toney